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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-eighth year

Identical letters dated 16 May 2013 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Pursuant to my recent letters and the démarche by the Arab delegation in follow-up to the emergency meeting of the League of Arab States held on 12 May regarding the critical situation in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, I must again draw attention to the provocations and illegal measures being perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, and its extremist settlers against the Palestinian people, their land and their holy sites, especially in Occupied East Jerusalem.

Palestinian demonstrations were met with typical excessive force by the Israeli occupying forces on 15 May, the day marking the sixty-fifth year since Al-Nakba (1948), an event in which the majority of the Palestinian people were uprooted and expelled from their homeland and forced to endure dispossession, displacement, oppression and human rights violations, a grave injustice that continues to this day. Several Palestinians were injured by Israel's use of rubber bullets, tear gas and sound bombs in various cities, including in East Jerusalem, Al-Khalil and Ramallah, as well as in Bethlehem, on 14 May, during a rally marking the anniversary of Al-Nakba near the Dheisheh refugee camp.

On this solemn occasion, we reaffirm the right of Palestine refugees to return, a collective and individual right in accordance with international law and United Nations resolutions, particularly General Assembly resolution 194 (III). We reiterate that this right does not diminish with the passage of time and that respect of it is central to the attainment of a just and lasting solution to the conflict. On this day, we also recognize the extraordinary efforts of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, which has assisted over 5 million Palestine refugees over more than six decades, through constant crises and upheavals in the region.

Tensions have remained very high in Occupied East Jerusalem in particular. Clashes broke out yesterday near Al-Aqsa Mosque as Israeli extremists raided the

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Moroccan Gate, attempting to enter Al-Haram Al-Sharif, and Israeli occupying forces escorted yet another group of extremists into the compound while at the same time arresting dozens of Palestinian protesters. These provocations come on the heel of several other inflammatory, violent actions and the constant threats made by Jewish extremists and settlers against the Palestinian people and Christian and Muslim holy places with the aim of inciting a religious dimension of the conflict. We thus once again call the international community's attention to these illegal, extremist actions, which are evoking strong emotions and aggravating already high tensions, portending an explosive situation, and urge measures to redress this situation and promote calm. The Security Council, mandated under the Charter of the United Nations with the maintenance of peace and security, has a clear responsibility in this regard that must be upheld.

At the same time, Israel is exacerbating the situation with its relentless colonization campaign throughout the State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem. Not for a single day have its illegal settlement activities ceased, nor have its settlers stopped their rampages. Reports by Peace Now, which monitors Israeli settlement activities, reveal that the Government is facilitating duplicitous "legal" measures to entrench four more settlement "outposts" on occupied Palestinian land, rather than acting to remove these illegal structures in line with international law and road map obligations.

We reiterate that such illegal actions undermine the contiguity of the Palestinian land and threaten to sabotage the two-State solution based on the pre-1967 borders and the effort to revive the political process for its achievement. These actions also fuel the lawlessness of settlers, who continue their theft of Palestinian land. On 16 May, Israeli settlers brazenly attempted to take over land belonging to a Palestinian family in Nabi Samuel, forcibly placing a caravan on it. Other recent incidents include: an attack by settlers on a Palestinian man and his three sons near Nablus, on 9 May; an attack by settlers in the Beit Einoon area, where live ammunition was fired at several homes; a raid by extremist settlers on Burin village, on 11 May; and an attack on Sawiya village, on 13 May, in which settlers exhumed graves and desecrated the cemetery with racist, threatening graffiti.

Israeli settler rampages in the past week have also resulted in the widespread destruction of Palestinian land. The Palestinian agricultural sector and thousands of livelihoods are under constant attack as settlers target Palestinian farmers and their crops and orchards, particularly olive and other fruit trees. On 12 May, settlers deliberately drowned Palestinian land in Nabi Samuel with wastewater, causing damage to hundreds of olive and almond trees. On 13 May, settlers burned two dunums of wheat fields south of Al-Khalil, where 80 olive trees had been uprooted. On 13 May, settlers set fire to fields in Qaryut, destroying 15 more dunums and repeated the attack the following day, burning land and uprooting 150 olive and fig trees. On 16 May, the Israeli occupying forces uprooted over 1,200 olive tree saplings in Ras Karker and razed over 40 dunums of land.

We reiterate our calls on the international community to give due attention to these ongoing Israeli acts of aggression and provocation and to act to compel Israel, the occupying Power, to cease all of its violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and to abide by its obligations under international law. The United Nations, particularly the Security Council, has a responsibility to uphold the rule of law and to contribute to diffusing the escalation of

tensions, which constitute a threat to international peace and security. All necessary efforts must be made to calm the situation, prevent further destabilization and allow for the fruition of current peace efforts.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 465 letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 13 May 2013 (A/ES-10/592-S/2013/282), constitute a basic record of the crimes committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations